Process & Decision Documentation

Project/Assignment Decisions

For side quest 5, I redesigned example 5 to focus on camera movement and pacing. I created a world that is wider than the screen and added a side-scrolling camera that follows the player. Instead of showing everything at once, the environment is revealed slowly as the player moves through space. The goal of the game is to save Earth (the sad photo in the splash screen) from the shooting star by collecting it.

To evoke emotion, I used a black background with twinkling stars and planets to create a calm but slightly tense atmosphere. I spaced out the platforms to control pacing and build anticipation before the player discovers the hidden star. The star acts as a small interactive symbol that is only revealed as the camera scrolls across the world.

I edited the WorldLevel class to control world size and visuals, and I updated sketch.js to handle camera movement, game states, and the collision that triggers the ending screen. Overall, my decisions focused on using motion and reveal to create a more immersive experience.

Side Quest: *GenAI Documentation*

Date Used: 20 Feb 2026

Tool Disclosure: ChatGPT (GPT 5.2)

Purpose of Use: GenAI was used to help me redesign Example 5 into a more reflective, camera-based experience. I used it mainly for implementation guidance, including how to control camera movement, how to add planets and stars as background visuals, and how to create splash and end screens without breaking the game loop. I also asked for help understanding what certain lines of code were doing, so I could adjust them properly.

Summary of Interaction: I started by explaining that I wanted a meditative side-scrolling space world where the environment is revealed slowly as the camera moves. GenAI helped me understand how to position planets across a wider world, how to prevent images from repeating, and how to add a star background to the splash and end screens. Some suggestions initially caused repetition issues or did not behave as expected, so I simplified the code and manually adjusted placement values. I also used

GenAI to clarify how loops and image positioning worked, so I could make intentional changes since AI was not being helpful for certain tasks.

Human Decision Point(s): I decided to keep the gameplay simple (one hidden star to collect, no enemies, no score). I used my coding knowledge from Week 4's code I had to implement the star. I kept the focus on pacing and camera movement. When planets repeated across the sky, I chose to remove the loop and manually position each planet to control the game progression. I also decided where each planet and platform would appear in the world and adjusted sizes and spacing to "evoke emotion". All final visual placements were chosen by me through testing.

Integrity & Verification Note: All GenAI suggestions were reviewed and tested before being finalized. I manually tested the splash screen, camera movement, planet progression, star collision, and end screen multiple times. When planets repeated or background images were incorrectly sized, I simplified the logic and corrected it directly. I verified that the game states (splash, play, end) transitioned properly and that the camera remained within world bounds.

Scope of GenAI Use: GenAI supported debugging assistance, explanation of code behaviour, and implementation guidance for visuals and camera movement. It did not create the overall concept, pacing design, emotional direction, world layout, or final visual placement values. All creative decisions and structural changes were made by me.

Limitations or Misfires: Some GenAI suggestions initially overcomplicated the implementation, especially with planet background looping. Certain examples required simplification to match my beginner skill level and assignment scope. I had to manually remove unnecessary loops and adjust positioning when the visuals repeated or behaved unexpectedly.

Summary of Process (Human + Tool)

I began with the idea of creating a space journey where the camera reveals the game world gradually. I explained that I wanted to add planets (already downloaded and in preload) within the space sky. I expanded the world width and adjusted camera smoothing to control pacing as GenAI suggested and explained the steps. I added planets in a specific order (Earth, Moon, Mars, Saturn) to create progression. GenAI was used to clarify how to implement these features along with debugging, but I manually positioned all visuals and adjusted the pacing through testing. The final

experience reflects deliberate control over motion and reveals rather than complex mechanics.

Decision Points & Trade-offs

Decision 1: Repeating background vs. placed planets

- Options considered: Use a loop to repeat planets across the sky vs. manually position each planet once in the world
- What changed: I removed the repeating loop and placed Earth, Moon, Mars, and Saturn at fixed world positions.
- Why: The repeating version made the world feel busy and caused planets to repeat. Placing each planet once created a clearer sense of progression and pacing as the camera scrolls.

Decision 2: Complex mechanics vs. minimal interaction

- Options considered: Add enemies, scoring, or multiple stars to collect vs. a single hidden star goal
- What changed: I kept the gameplay focused on movement and discovering one star that triggers the ending screen.
- Why: This kept the focus on camera movement, pacing, and emotional atmosphere rather than mechanics.

Verification & Judgement

I verified the project by testing camera movement, splash to play screen transitions, star collision detection, and the ending screen multiple times. I ensured planets appeared in the correct order and did not repeat. I also tested world boundaries to confirm the camera did not move outside the level width. All final pacing, spacing, and visual placement decisions were made by me after testing.

Limitations, Dead Ends, or Open Questions

Some GenAI suggestions initially caused background repetition or unnecessary complexity, which required extreme simplification. I learned that loops can unintentionally create repeating visuals if not controlled carefully. Future improvements could include subtle fading between planets, when certain platforms are jumped on, the planets change, or level progression.

Appendix

ChatGPT Chat: https://chatgpt.com/share/6998de41-9344-8003-8805-ed1a2a3a58fd

References of the images used in this Side Quest

Denis. (n.d.). *Pixel art space icons: planets, rockets, and astronauts in retro style* [Digital

image]. Adobe Stock.
https://stock.adobe.com/ca/search?k=planet+pixel&search_type=usertyped&asset_id=1726024516

sad_planet.jpg (used on the start screen). Source: Pinterest (original creator not

identified), https://ca.pinterest.com/pin/662310688995345995/

yippie.jpeg (used on the end screen). Source: Pinterest (original creator not identified),

https://ca.pinterest.com/pin/662310688995346164/